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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 16273 091704Z

62
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 SAJ-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 /136 W
---------- 080925
R 091651Z NOV 73
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8645
INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
USMISSION BERLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: SELF-CONFIDENT FDP HEADS FOR WIESBADEN

1. SUMMARY: ATMOSPHERE AT FDP CONVENTION IN WIESBADEN NOVEMBER 12-14 WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE OPTIMISTIC, REFLECTING THE PARTY'S PLEASURE OVER RECENT PUBLIC OPINION POLL RESULTS AND THE BENEFITS THE FDP IS REAPING FROM CURRENT INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES OF SPD AND CDU. CONVENTION IS NOT EXPECTED TO PRODUCE ANY MAJOR SURPRISES. PARTY LEADERSHIP'S POLITICAL MESSAGE WILL PROBABLY UNDERLINE FDP'S INDEPENDENT ROLE BUT WILL
REAFFIRM IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING PRESENT COALITION. SUBSTANTIVE DEBATE WILL CENTER ON MEDIA POLICY; DISCUSSIONS WILL ALSO COVER RADICALS IN PUBLIC SERVICE AND CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. RECENT POLLS SHOW FDP IS GAINING IN POPULARITY
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PAGE 02 BONN 16273 091704Z

(PERHAPS AS HIGH AS 10 PERCENT OF ELECTORATE), PRIMARILY

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

AT EXPENSE OF SPD. THE FDP'S INTERNAL HOUSE IS IN RELATIVELY GOOD ORDER. ALTHOUGH THE GAP LEFT BY FLACH'S DEATH WILL BE FELT FOR SOME TIME TO COME, THE PARTY HAS NO MAJOR PROBLEMS OF LEADERSHIP OR COHESION AND IT IS PULLING ITS WEIGHT IN THE GOVERNMENT. THE CDU, IN CONTRAST, IS IN THE THROES OF TRYING TO SORT OUT ITS INTERNAL LEADERSHIP, WHILE THE SPD IS SUFFERING INCREASINGLY FROM FACTIONAL RIVALRY AND INDECISIVE LEADERSHIP, AND IS EXHIBITING A NOTICEABLE TREND LEFTWARD, AT LEAST AT THE LOWER LEVELS.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER AND PARTY CHAIRMAN WALTER SCHEEL WILL SET THE TONE OF THE CONVENTION IN HIS OPENING SPEECH NOVEMBER 12. HE IS EXPECTED TO DRAW A LINE BETWEEN THE FDP AND ITS SPD COALITION PARTNER. BOTH THE SPD'S LEFT WING AND THE FDP'S RIGHT WING (GENSCHER) HAVE BEEN MAKING A POINT OF DRAWING THIS LINE IN PUBLIC IN RECENT WEEKS; THE EXTENT TO WHICH SCHEEL DECIDES TO MAKE THE DISTINCTION WILL BE CAREFULLY WATCHED.

BUT THE BASIC THRUST OF HIS REMARKS IS EXPECTED TO EMPHASIZE THE PARTY'S CONTINUING PROXIMITY TO THE SPD ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES, THE INDEPENDENT AND CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE THE FDP IS PLAYING IN THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING THE PRESENT COALITION.

4. MEDIA POLICY IS THE THEME OF THE CONVENTION AND WILL OCCUPY MOST OF THE DELEGATES' TIME. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO DEVELOP A PARTY POSITION ON WAYS TO ENSURE PUBLICATION OF GREATER VARIETY OF OPINIONS, INCREASE THE ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE OF THE PRESS, AND PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE OF JOURNALISTS.

5. OTHER POTENTIALLY CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS WILL INCLUDE CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT OF RADICALS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE. DISCUSSION OF MITBESTIMMUNG (INDUSTRIAL CO-DETERMINATION) WILL BE CONFINED LARGELY TO A REPORT ON STATUS OF THE INTRA-COALITION NEGOTIATIONS.
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EO Systematic Review
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